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REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE UNITED NATIONS ANGOLA VERIFICATION MISSION (UNAVEM III)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to paragraph 24 of Security Council resolution 1075 (1996) of 11 October 1996, in which the Council, inter alia, requested me to report by 20 November 1996 on the progress made towards consolidating the peace process in Angola. It covers developments concerning the fulfilment of pending tasks since my last report to the Council of 4 October 1996 (S/1996/827), in particular the tasks of the União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (UNITA) in paragraph 12 of resolution 1075 (1996).

II. POLITICAL ASPECTS

2. Immediately after the adoption of Security Council resolution 1075 (1996), my Special Representative, Mr. Alioune Blondin Beye, undertook a series of intensive consultations with both parties, including with President José Eduardo dos Santos and with the leader of UNITA, Mr. Jonas Savimbi, who both committed themselves to the implementation of the provisions of resolution 1075 (1996). Earlier in October, Mr. Beye had held consultations in the region with the Presidents of Gabon, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe, as well as with the Vice-President of South Africa, in follow-up to the summit meeting of States members of the Southern African Development Community (SADC). Several foreign dignitaries visited Angola in an attempt to encourage the parties to meet their obligations. The Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund, Mr. Michel Camdessus, also visited Angola at my request to discuss pressing economic and financial issues with the Government of Angola.

3. As promised by Mr. Savimbi, on 25 October 1996, UNITA submitted a list of tasks which it intended to fulfil by 15 November 1996. A comprehensive implementation timetable, encompassing all pending military, police and political tasks to be completed by both parties, was subsequently prepared by UNAVEM III in consultation with the Government, UNITA and the three observer States (Portugal, the Russian Federation and the United States of America) and adopted by the Joint Commission on 31 October 1996.

4. On 28 October 1996, UNITA submitted the list of officials it wished to nominate to the Government of National Unity and Reconciliation, as well as an updated list of deputies to fill the 70 seats won by UNITA in the legislative elections in 1992. In accordance with the provisions of the Lusaka Protocol on the transformation of Vorgan into a non-partisan radio station, UNITA has completed the legal and administrative formalities and submitted the necessary documentation to the Government. Earlier, on 1 October, pursuant to the request of the Joint Commission, UNITA had submitted proposals on the special constitutional status of the leader of the largest opposition party. UNITA had also proposed that the current National Assembly, whose tenure expires on 26 November 1996, be transformed into a Constituent Assembly which would revise the country's Constitution.

5. The Government, for its part, has indicated that discussions on major political issues can begin only after the completion of the military tasks enumerated in the consolidated implementation timetable. At the same time, on 13 November, the National Assembly adopted legislation that revised the Constitution to extend its current mandate until legislative elections are held, which is expected to be within no less than two and no more than four years. Following the adoption by the National Assembly of the above-mentioned legislation, the Special Representative met on 14 November with the President of the Assembly to discuss the impact of this measure on the peace process and the need to resolve constitutional issues in the spirit of consensus and mutual consultation. He also travelled on 16 November to Bailundo to review with Mr. Savimbi the implementation of the pending tasks contained in the consolidated timetable. During the meeting, Mr. Savimbi once again committed his organization to complete all the tasks assigned to UNITA on 20 November. On 14 November, the Government submitted to the Joint Commission its proposals on the specific principles of the national reconciliation on the special status of the leader of the largest opposition party. The Government and UNITA proposals will be discussed within the framework of the Joint Commission. Although the long-awaited fifth meeting between President dos Santos and Mr. Savimbi on Angolan territory has not yet taken place, the two leaders have recently re-established telephone contact and discussed several crucial aspects of the peace process.

III. MILITARY MATTERS

A. Quartering of UNITA troops

6. By 18 November, the number of UNITA troops registered in the 15 quartering areas established by the United Nations had reached a total of 65,362. This figure includes personnel from the command and control post which UNITA has started to dismantle, as well as the "UNITA police" which were referred to in my last report to the Council (S/1996/827). The latter are being quartered in accordance with the special plan approved by the Joint Commission. However, the number of UNITA personnel who have left quartering areas without authorization stood at 12,494 on 18 November. In the meantime, it is expected that UNITA troops based in Cabinda will finally be quartered in the next few days.

7. As of 18 November, a total of 29,583 personal weapons, 4,454 crew-served weapons and 8,560 kilogrammes of ammunition had been handed over to UNAVEM in quartering areas. Outside the quartering areas, UNITA had handed over at five different locations 29,723 personal weapons, 4,772 light and medium crew-served weapons and 637,232 kilogrammes of ammunition. But the quantity and quality of weapons handed over by UNITA continues to be a matter of concern. At the beginning of October, the UNAVEM Force Commander submitted to the Joint Commission a comprehensive evaluation report, in which, while commending the effort made by UNITA, he recommended that it hand over to the United Nations additional and substantial quantities of various weapons. The main conclusion drawn in his report was that UNITA had not fully implemented the provisions of the Lusaka Protocol in this crucial area. Although UNITA challenged the report's basic assumptions, stating, in particular, that large quantities of its military equipment had been lost during the hostilities between September and November 1994, the Joint Commission approved its main recommendations. UNITA is therefore expected to make additional efforts to surrender more weapons and ammunition. On 26 October, UNAVEM discovered a company's worth of weapons in a warehouse in Negage, but until 18 November UNITA refused to cooperate in the transfer of those arms to United Nations custody. Inevitably this cast doubt on UNITA's sincerity in this matter. However, on 18 November, it was reported that UNITA had agreed to have the weapons in the Negage quartering area transported to the Lobito weapon storage area. This exercise should be completed by the week ending 30 November 1996.

8. UNITA claims that it has quartered all its troops in the diamond-producing provinces of Lunda Norte and Lunda Sul, but some reports indicate that this process also is not yet complete, as some of the UNITA police personnel have been transformed into "mining police". UNAVEM III has also received information that weapons are being distributed in some areas to so-called "local self-defence" or militia elements associated with UNITA. In the meantime, each party has accused the other of acquiring and stockpiling additional weapons and war matériel, which, in their view, might indicate preparations for renewed hostilities. UNAVEM III has written to the Government and UNITA delegations to the Joint Commission requesting them to provide the United Nations with specific information about where they allege such military equipment to be located, so that proper investigations may be conducted.

B. Completion of the formation of the Angolan Armed Forces

9. The selection of UNITA troops for incorporation into the Angolan Armed Forces (FAA) has proceeded, albeit slowly, with 16,152 UNITA personnel having been selected as of 18 November 1996. This number would have been higher had the Government not imposed restrictive selection criteria. Regrettably, all selected troops remain in quartering areas and their incorporation into FAA has still not begun, even though the Government has provided UNAVEM III with comprehensive plans in this regard. For these plans to become reality, however, extensive logistic arrangements must be in place, and I once again urge the Government to expedite all necessary preparations. The Government has indicated that it will be ready to incorporate the nine UNITA Generals (some of whom arrived in Luanda in September) into FAA only after the completion of the quartering process, but I believe that the earliest possible incorporation of

these Generals would have a beneficial effect on the selection and incorporation process. The consolidated implementation timetable adopted by the Joint Commission calls for the selection of all 26,300 UNITA troops by 15 November and the incorporation of 11,300 of them by 20 November, with the remaining number scheduled to be formally inducted into FAA by 11 December 1996.

C. Status of the cease-fire, free circulation of the population and security matters

10. While the cease-fire continues to hold throughout the country, the number of cease-fire violations increased somewhat, reflecting remaining tensions in several provinces. A total of 90 incidents was reported from 1 October to 7 November, 54 of which have been confirmed by UNAVEM III. While many of these cases were related to disputes over diamond-producing areas or cattle rustling, on several occasions during the reporting period Government forces made incursions into areas vacated by UNITA; the Government forces also took over temporarily several locations around the city of Kuito (Bié Province), and one near Saurimo (Lunda Sul Province).

11. At the same time, some progress has been achieved in dismantling checkpoints maintained by UNITA and Government troops in various parts of Angola, thus contributing to the much-needed free circulation of people and goods. However, the dismantlement process is far from complete, and UNAVEM III is working with the parties to bring it nearer to completion.

12. As to interference by the parties with United Nations activities, it is regrettable that on several occasions UNAVEM III personnel have been harassed and prevented from carrying out their duties by both UNITA troops and Government police. Twenty such cases were attributed to UNITA and three to the Government. This behaviour, if unchecked, will continue to impede the operations of the Mission; the Joint Commission has repeatedly and strongly condemned such acts.

13. The last phase of the withdrawal of FAA troops from their forward positions, that is, in the Lunda Norte Province, commenced on 2 October 1996. While 453 FAA troops pulled back as required from Lucapa Town and Kalonda, some of them remained nearby, as well as near the town of Andrada; the Government insists that UNITA should vacate these sensitive areas before FAA continues its own withdrawal.

IV. POLICE ASPECTS

14. An operational plan for the incorporation of the UNITA police into the Angolan National Police (ANP) was approved by the parties on 29 October 1996. It envisages the assembly of UNITA police and their subsequent transportation to quartering areas where, after being registered, they will be disarmed and undergo a selection process for service with ANP. While UNITA gave the total strength of its police force as 5,500, UNAVEM has so far verified the presence of 4,962 of them in almost 300 locations throughout Angola.

15. According to the plan, the quartering of UNITA police was to be concluded by 10 November. However, the process started only on 11 November. Seven days later, 2,059 UNITA police had reported to quartering areas and had handed over 1,304 weapons of various types and 1,815 rounds of ammunition. In the meantime, the Government continued to canton successfully about 5,500 of its rapid reaction police. With regard to Government training of UNITA personnel to provide security for their leaders, 28 of them will complete their training in November and 79 others will follow shortly thereafter. In recent days, the process has proceeded slowly, owing again to the strict criteria imposed by the Goverrment. The selection of the remaining bodyguards was completed on 15 November and the Government's final decision concerning the new recruits is being awaited.

16. The results of the initial phases of the programme for the disarmament of the civilian population, which was launched by the Government ahead of schedule, continue to be relatively modest. The United Nations is now encouraging the authorities to embark, under UNAVEM III verification, on the enforcement stage of this operation. The successful initiation of this phase could have a positive effect on the security situation in the country, which remains precarious, as well as promote a climate of confidence between the two Angolan parties. Indications are that the Government is planning to proceed with this phase only after the extension of the State administration throughout the country, so that it can implement the programmes simultaneously nationwide.

V. OBSERVATIONS

17. The Lusaka Protocol, which was signed on 20 November 1994, has brought a two-year respite to Angola, the longest period of peace the country has experienced for decades. Much progress has been achieved during this period, and the United Nations and Member States concerned can be proud of their contribution to it.

18. However, a long-lasting settlement in Angola has not yet been achieved. Since the peace process entered its crucial phase, the international community has become increasingly disappointed at the dangerously slow pace of the implementation of the Lusaka Protocol. This concern was expressed in strong terms in Security Council resolution 1075 (1996), in which, the Council, inter alia, enumerated a series of requirements that UNITA must promptly fulfil. Since then, the agreement on a consolidated timetable for the completion of pressing tasks has brought the most urgent issues into focus. Some progress has been made, especially in recent days, but implementation of the timetable is still behind schedule. Yet again, the commitments which had been solemnly entered into only a few weeks previously, have not been fully implemented, especially by UNITA. Again the expectations of the international community have been disappointed.

19. The completion in good faith by UNITA of the quartering of its forces still remains the paramount task to be achieved. It is imperative that the UNITA leadership cooperate fully with the United Nations in resolving outstanding issues related to the quartering of all its troops, the handover of all its military equipment and the formation of the unified armed forces. For its part,

the Government is expected to complete all logistic preparations for the incorporation of UNITA troops and police personnel into FAA and ANP. Now is the time for the parties, in particular UNITA, to take decisive steps forward. I will provide the Security Council with a comprehensive update of the status of the peace process in my next report, which is due on 1 December 1996.

20. In the meantime, I urge the parties to avoid engaging in any activity which might jeopardize the peace process and aggravate the present, still tense, atmosphere. It is important that all Member States concerned step up their efforts in support of the peace process and, in this context, provide the Joint Commission with any available information on arms caches or acquisitions, as well as on clandestine concentrations of troops, in order to assist UNAVEM III in verification. I also strongly appeal to the Angolan parties, in particular to UNITA, to respect the safety and security of United Nations personnel and property. Obstruction of UNAVEM activities and harassment of its personnel are absolutely unacceptable.

21. In my forthcoming report to the Council, I will submit recommendations on the role that the United Nations should continue to play in Angola in order to consolidate the peace process, as well as plans for the further downsizing of the Mission's formed military units. In the meantime, pursuant to paragraph 45 of my last report to the Council (S/1996/827), I have decided to withdraw from Angola four United Nations infantry and support units, with a total strength of between 600 to 700 personnel, by the end of December 1996.